

Media Update

8 October 2021

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

--

MESSAGE ON WORLD POST DAY 2021

9 October 2021

On World Post Day, we recognize the invaluable contributions of postal workers to our societies and economies. The vast postal network – involving millions of workers moving billions of pieces of mail through hundreds of thousands of post offices – is woven into our societies, connecting communities the world over.

As we continue to confront the COVID-19 pandemic, the resilience and commitment of these essential workers are an inspiration. We owe them our gratitude.

The theme for this year's World Post Day – “Innovate to recover” – highlights how the postal sector is adapting to new realities and redefining itself, taking on new roles founded on digitalization, e-commerce and financial services.

“Innovate to recover” invites everyone in the international postal sector to embrace creative change and leverage technology as we together look to build forward better from the pandemic.

I congratulate the Universal Postal Union and the international postal sector for your tireless efforts delivering mail, providing essential services, enabling trade, and promoting literacy. The United Nations looks forward to

advancing our partnership in the service of sustainable development and a better world for all.

UNITED NATIONS

SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

--

MESSAGE ON WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY 2021 10 October 2021

Around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic is taking a terrible toll on people's mental health.

Millions of people face grief over lost family members and friends. Many more are anxious over unemployment and fearful of the future. Older people may experience isolation and loneliness, while children and adolescents may feel alienated and distressed.

Without determined action, the mental health impact may last far longer than the pandemic itself.

We must act to redress the glaring inequalities exposed by the pandemic – including the inequality in access to mental health services.

In high-income countries, over 75 percent of people with depression report that they do not receive adequate care.

And in low- and middle-income countries, over 75 percent of people with mental health conditions receive no treatment at all.

This is the direct consequence of chronic under-investment, as governments spend an average of just over 2 percent of their health budgets on mental health.

This is unacceptable.

At long last, we are beginning to see recognition that there can be no health without mental health.

Member States have endorsed the World Health Organization's updated Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan.

The United Nations family, together with partners across the global mental health community, are introducing new guidelines and developing new tools to improve mental health.

These are positive steps – but we have a long way to go.

On World Mental Health Day and every day, let us commit to work together with urgency and purpose to ensure quality mental health care for all people, everywhere.

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

--

MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL 11 October 2021

The strength, health and empowerment of the world's girls is a matter for every single day of the year. The International Day of the Girl is an opportunity to recommit to this global imperative.

Today's girls are part of a digital generation. It is our responsibility to join with them in all their diversity, amplify their power and solutions as digital change-makers, and address the obstacles they face in the digital space.

The path to girls' digital equality is steep. A massive gap in internet use spanning geographies and generations has grown from 11 per cent in 2013 to 17 per cent six years later. In more than two thirds of all countries, girls

make up only 15 percent of graduates in STEM subjects – science, technology, engineering and math.

Girls have equal ability and immense potential in these fields, and when we empower them, everyone benefits. I saw this long before I began my political career, when I was a teacher in Lisbon and witnessed the power of education to uplift individuals and communities. That experience has guided my vision for gender equality in education ever since.

Investments in closing the digital gender divide yield huge dividends for all. The United Nations is committed to working with girls so that this generation, whoever they are and whatever their circumstances, can fulfil their potential. The Generation Equality Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation is our new platform, where governments, civil society, the private sector and young leaders are coming together around collective initiatives and investments to support girls' digital access, skills and creativity.

Together, let us ensure that girls play their full part in the digital generation to design and secure our common future.